

1991

BOARD OF RECOUNT

July 17, 1991

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4:00 P.M.

Chairman Gardner called the meeting to order.

Present: Mr. Gardner, Ald. Bourque and Mr. Rivard
Mssrs.: Moni Sharma, Tom Clark, Bob McKenzie, State
Representatives Joanne O'Rourke and Ray Buckley
Senator Eleanor Podles

Chairman Gardner stated that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain information from Southern New Hampshire Planning and the City Solicitor's Office.

Chairman Gardner addressed item 3 of the agenda:

Discussion with Moni Sharma, Southern NH Planning.

Moni Sharma, Southern NH Planning, opened the discussion stating that his office had prepared a map of the wards in Manchester, which he reviewed with the Committee. Mr. Sharma stated that each ward contained many blocks with numbers in them, known as census blocks; that the City map was combined with the census map; that it was then combined with the census data and the political ward lines were overlaid. Mr. Sharma commented that the handout listing the population for each ward was the graphic representation of the census blocks on the map; that the figures on the handout were corrected; that the census figure of 99,567 and the number derived by using the mapping format method was 798 off. Mr. Sharma noted that if the ward boundaries correspond with the census block then you get the accurate count but if the ward boundary goes between or dissects any census block the computer counts the number in both wards. Mr. Sharma further noted that these double counts exist between wards one and three, three and nine, and eleven and twelve and that the double counts are the reason for the additional 798 on the map.

Ald. Bourque asked which ward would get the doubled figure in the case of a double count. Mr. Sharma stated that the Committee could go back to the planning map and see how many houses there are and multiply by the number of persons per household and subtract that number from that side of the block.

Bob McKenzie, Planning Department, stated that two of the double counts don't contain any houses. Mr. McKenzie further stated that he could consult with Mr. Sharma and resolve the figures.

Mr. Sharma stated that he didn't think that these numbers would be of too much consequence; that if the Committee were to take 100,000 people and start with the premise that they are going to try to get an equal and that number in all wards, the average comes out to 8,300; that some areas will lose and some will gain and that there really is no way to make it come out equal.

Ald. Bourque asked Mr. Sharma how he obtained the information. Mr. Sharma stated that the State had purchased nine pieces of equipment and distributed them to regional planning commissions for mapping purposes and that they are an affiliate agency for the upkeep of the census; that Mr. Tom Duffy, the Senior Planner for the State, is the City contact for redistricting plans and that he was probably originally contacted. Ald. Bourque stated that she had contacted Mr. Sharma directly. Chairman Gardner stated Tom Duffy is working with the Cities in conjunction with the state for those Cities that want the service however, Manchester wanted a quicker start and for that reason contacted Mr. Sharma. Mr. Sharma stated that the only additional thing that put this project ahead of schedule was to superimpose the data on the ward map.

Mr. Rivard asked whether or not the map represented the ward lines as they exist today. Mr. Sharma stated that it did. Mr. Rivard then asked why it would almost impossible to reach the 8,300 number. Mr. Sharma stated that because of demographics it is not possible to get exactly 8,300 and the Committee should try to come close.

Chairman Gardner asked Mr. Sharma if he felt confident that the figures on the map were correct and if any kind of a check had been done. Mr. Sharma stated that when the first map was completed, two planners from his office had reviewed it and that he feels reasonably confident. Chairman Gardner asked if the committee should do any checks themselves. Mr. Sharma suggested that the Committee could do a couple of spot checks; that he could prepare a census tract and census block map to use to check the original map. Chairman Gardner asked if the map was broken down by tracks and then further by blocks. Mr. Sharma stated that the map was broken down into census units.

Chairman Gardner commented that the Secretary of Commerce had stated that the regional census figures would be sustained; that no revisions would be recognized as accurate and that our population increase would have been 2.7% over what the region had been.

Mr. Sharma stated that he would provide maps for the Committee and one for the City Solicitor's Office.

Chairman Gardner commented that he thought all census blocks were based on streets. Mr. Sharma stated that in addition to streets some blocks have railroad lines or brooks or any type of physical

feature as their boundaries. Chairman Gardner suggested that the Committee consider having all natural boundaries when they draw the lines.

Chairman Gardner requested that Mr. Sharma work with Mr. McKenzie to make the necessary changes for those areas that are effected by double counts. Mr. Sharma stated that he would and that he would deliver four revised maps to the Clerk's Office.

Chairman Gardner addressed item 4 of the agenda:

Discussion with Tom Clark, City Solicitor's Office.

Atty. Clark stated that there are two ways of redistricting and both ways involve going to referendum; that one way is through the charter amendment process and that the other way is going through legislation; that it was his understanding that there was a bill introduced in Concord to redistrict throughout the State and that if lines were drawn by September 15 an amendment could be submitted and the referendum could be on the November ballot.

Chairman Gardner asked whether or not getting on the November ballot would mean that the proposal had to be finished by September 15. Atty. Clark stated that the State deadline is the 15th. Chairman Gardner stated that it would be impossible to know by the 15th whether or not the voters would accept the proposal. Atty. Clark concurred and stated that in 1981 the first plan was rejected and it wasn't until 1983 that the City was redistricted.

Ald. Bourque asked how redistricting could be done by charter and whether or not this would be done by the Aldermen. Atty. Clark responded that the charter amendment process involved the Board sending a proposal to public hearing, and ordering it on the ballot at a regular or special election; that the time frame on that is also tight and that it would have to be ordered to the ballot by September 6. Ald. Bourque asked if the Bill gave the Committee a time frame. Atty. Clark stated that usually the Bill is passed first and that it was his understanding that the bill would not be passed by the two bodies this year. Rep. Raymond Buckley stated that the last time the Board did not accept the proposal. Atty. Clark stated that the proposal that was put on the ballot got defeated and that then the work was done over by the Legislature and presented to the voters for the second time. Ald. Bourque commented that it appeared that the Board had amended the charter last time. Atty. Clark concurred and stated that to put the charter amendment on the ballot it had to be done 60 days prior to the election.

Mr. Rivard asked if the Committee was operating under the City Charter. Atty. Clark concurred and stated that the Committee's work consisted of coming up with a plan and presenting it to the Board. Mr. Rivard asked whether or not the Committee has a deadline and whether or not the proposal had to go on the ballot

this November. Atty. Clark stated that it was preferable to get it done as soon as possible; that legally only if someone challenges it or if the court orders the Committee to so; and that the Committee should make every effort to have it done. Sen. Eleanor Podles stated that the Legislature was waiting to do its work. Ald. Bourque asked if the Legislature could change any of the lines. Sen. Podles said that they would not.

Atty. Clark stated that most importantly the Committee has to decide the placement of the lines, report to the full Board with a recommendation; that assuming the Board approves the plan it would order it to public hearing, which would be held by this Committee or by the full Board; that within 7 days after the public hearing the Board has to decide whether to put the amendment on the ballot; that the decision must be made at least 60 days before the election. Ald. Bourque requested that Atty. Clark prepare a timetable for the Committee. Atty. Clark stated that he would and that the Committee always had the option of recommending a special election. Rep. Buckley suggested that it could also be done during the Presidential Primary in February. Atty. Clark stated that this would still be a special Municipal Election and would still incur additional expense for the City. Mr. Rivard asked if the Committee did not meet the time frame for November then would the next earliest opportunity to place it on the ballot be in February. Atty. Clark stated that legally it could be done at any time. Mr. Rivard then asked if February was the earliest date without incurring a special cost. Atty. Clark stated that any special election has a cost factor and this one would as well because of the cost of printing ballots.

Chairman Gardner commented that it was his belief that when the House and Senate go back in session they would prefer to have the Cities done with their work and that ideally the Committee should attempt to get this work done in time for the November ballot. Chairman Gardner further stated that he was concerned that the Committee had very little time. Atty. Clark stated that the ordering to the ballot had to be within 7 days of the public hearing and that it didn't have to take all 7 days. Rep. Joanne O'Rourke stated that she is on the Hillsborough County Redistricting Committee for the representative seats and that their work was dependent upon the work of the Committee and that she hoped that they could complete it as expeditiously as possible.

There being no further business, on a motion of Ald. Bourque, duly seconded by Mr. Rivard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

L. R. Bernier
Clerk of Committee